COUNTY OF ALBEMARLE
Department of Planning & Community Development
401 McIntire Road, Room 218
Charlottesville, Virginia 22902-4596
(804) 296 - 5823
Fax (804) 972 – 4035

November 17, 1999

Frank Cox
220 East High St
Charlottesville, VA 22902

RE: SP-99-54 Covenant Upper School, Tax Map 90A, Parcel 2

Dear Mr. Cox:

The Albemarle County Board of Supervisors, at its meeting on November 10, 1999, unanimously approved the above-noted request to allow private school in accordance with Section 14.2.2(5) of the Zoning Ordinance. Please note that this approval is subject to the following conditions:

1. The Covenant Upper School shall be operated in accordance with the special use permit application and attached July 23, 1999 letter from Frank D. Cox, Jr. PE AICP, herein included as Attachment B. Student enrollment is not to exceed 550 students.

2. No subdivision of the property or expansion of the school use beyond that stated in the original special use permit application shall occur without amendment of this Special Use Permit.

3. Prior to final site plan approval, the applicant will be responsible for satisfying all Virginia Department of Transportation requirements related to signalization, intersection improvements, and roadway improvements on Stage Coach Road and Oak Hill Drive, and meeting requirements of the Department of Engineering and Public Works regarding traffic management and roadway improvements on Hickory Street.

4. All uses associated with the Covenant Upper School Hickory Street campus shall comply with the commercial setbacks set forth in Section 21.7 and the lighting requirements of Section 4.17.2(a) of the Zoning Ordinance.

5. Final site plan approval shall not be granted until the Albemarle County Service Authority approves public sewer service to the site.

In the event that the use, structure or activity for which this special use permit is issued shall not be commenced within eighteen (18) months after the issuance of such permit, the same shall be deemed abandoned and the authority granted thereunder shall thereupon terminate. For purposes of this section, the term "commenced" shall be construed to include the commencement of construction of any structure necessary to the use of such permit within two (2) years from the date of the issuance thereof which is thereafter completed within one (1) year.

Before beginning this use, you must obtain a zoning clearance from the Zoning Department. Before the Zoning Department will issue a clearance, you must comply with the conditions in this letter. For further information, please call Jan Sprinkle at 296-5875.

If you should have any questions or comments regarding the above-noted action, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

V. Wayne Cilimberg
Director of Planning & Community Development

VWC/jcf

Cc: Amelia McCulley
Jack Kelsey
Tex Weaver
Steve Allshouse

THE COX COMPANY
Planners · Landscape Architects
Civil Engineers · Urban Designers

July 23, 1999

Mr. Wayne Cilimberg, Director
Planning and Community Development
401 McIntire Road
Charlottesville, Virginia 22902

Re: Special Use Permit Application
Covenant Upper School Campus
Tax Map 90A-2, Parcel A
The County of Albemarle, Virginia

Dear Wayne:

On behalf of The Covenant School, the Board of Directors seeks the County's permission to develop a private school campus on TM 90A-2, Parcel A, a vacant 26-acre parcel on the north side of Hickory Road. Last year's gift to the school of the parcel from the owner's of the larger Biscuit Run land holdings enables Covenant to move ahead with its strategic plan for facility development. With this correspondence, I am forwarding a Special Use Permit application and supporting information to aid in the County's consideration of this request.

The Covenant School has a strong record of educational performance and quality as a college preparatory school. While its philosophy emphasizes community service and a well rounded curriculum, it's graduating students have been accepted at the finest colleges in the country. For example, approximately one-third of the 1999 graduating class was admitted to the University of Virginia and all graduates will attend the college of their first choice. As you may know, the school has been in existence since 1985, when it was founded with 45 students (K-6) at the County's old McIntire High School. Since that time time, the school has grown into a K-12 institution of 640 students.

Covenant currently houses its Upper School Campus at the McIntire site located at 1000 Birdwood Road in the City. The proposed project will relocate the Upper School to what will be known as the "Hickory Road Campus", thereby allowing the Lower School, currently housed at the former Mountainwood Hospital to be returned to the McIntire Campus. The project timing is being driven by the impending expiration date on the Mountainwood lease, which will not be renewed.

The school will be developed pursuant to the County's definition of a private school and, further, in accord with the applicable special use as designated the underlying R-2 District, as cited in Section 14.2.2.5.

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The initial phase of the project will accommodate an Upper School Campus for approximately 500 students as well as 50-60 faculty members and administrative staff. The total building size, including gymnasium and cafeteria, will be in the range of 90,000 to 95,000 square feet. The planned outdoor athletic facilities will include two soccer/lacrosse fields, a baseball fields, and tennis courts. A conceptual master plan for the campus will be presented later during the review process in order to highlight the features of the proposal.

I believe the rationale for a private school at this location is strong relative to health, safety, welfare and morals precepts. Based on my analysis of the various matters related to the grant of a special use permit, the application is consistent with the County's comprehensive planning framework, and it promotes good zoning and land use practices. Please consider the following:

Neighborhood Planning Considerations: As in many other residential neighborhoods throughout Albemarle County, private (and public) schools are complementary to and supportive of neighborhood and community environments. At this particular location, the planned campus will buffer existing single family residential areas from the higher density mobile home park. It will create a low-density, community "focal point" within an area which is under served by such features. The character of existing residential development is underscored by homes which are sited with extensive setbacks from the subject property.

Public Utility and Service Considerations: The campus location will have adequate public utilities and services. An existing water main is located in the Hickory Road right of way and the school is working with the Service Authority to establish a sanitary sewer extension. Public water and sewer demands for the school use will be less than those which would be generated by a residential subdivision developed to comprehensive plan densities. Fire, police and rescue services are in close proximity.

Traffic and Transportation Considerations: The campus location has excellent access to 5th Street and Interstate 64 via Hickory Road (a private frontage street) and Oak Hill Drive. Transportation capacities in the existing system are more than adequate for the private school use. The tract has approximately 1900 feet of street frontage on Hickory Road, a length sufficient to provide private individual driveway access to 22 single family residences if developed under R-2 zoning standards. It is intended that access to the proposed campus will be limited to not more than two private entrances from Hickory Road. Traffic generated by the school use will be no greater than that which would be generated from the residential development of the site to comprehensive plan densities.

Land Use Considerations: The school use may, in fact, provide for a better physical and environmental utilization of the property than that which could be achieved via R-2 residential development. Based on the various campus master plan options now under consideration by the Board of Directors, the conventional land use ratios and criteria of site utilization far exceed those for conventional, suburban residential subdivisions. As an illustration of this, our preliminary site concepts yield the following site and development characteristics for the campus:

- *Planned Building FAR = Less than 0.10*
- *Planned Building Coverage = Less than 6% of site*
- *Open Space and Recreation Areas = Greater than 80% of site*
- *Total Impervious Surfaces = Less than 15% of site*
- *Enhanced yards and setbacks*
- *Enhanced perimeter buffers*
- *Enhanced tree preservation and landscaping*
- *Site plan review mandatory (not required for SFD)*
- *Stormwater management and BMPs provided (not required for SFD)*

I greatly appreciate Bill Fritiz arranging the pre-application meeting which was held today prior to plan submission. Thank you for your consideration in this matter and I look forward to your ongoing direction as we pursue the Special Use Permit approval for The Covenant School. As mentioned in Mr. Taggart's letter, I am representing the school as a member of the school's Board of Directors and (2) our's firm principal which is conducting planning, engineering, and related site design functions.

Please contact me if additional information is needed. With kind regards, I am

Sincerely,

Frank D. Cox, Jr. PE AICP

attachments: SUP Application and Submission Exhibits

xc: Jack Taggart, Chairman, Board of Directors
Dr. Ronald Sykes, Headmaster
Robert Kroner, Esq.

SITE LOCATION

